CONTENTS

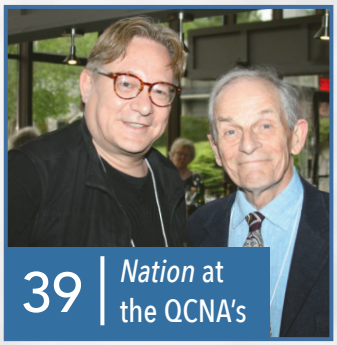
5 | Caribou herd avoids zoo

7 | AFN signs MOU with Canada

10 | Candidates for Grand Chief & Deputy Grand Chief

28 | Mining opportunities for Crees

34 | Michael "Champ" Petawabamo



39 | *Nation* at the QCNA's

EDITORIAL

Change and continuity 4

NEWS

Roaming free 5

A memorandum of opportunity? 7

IN BRIEF 9

FEATURES

The people's choice 10

Diamonds in the rough 28

Champ 34

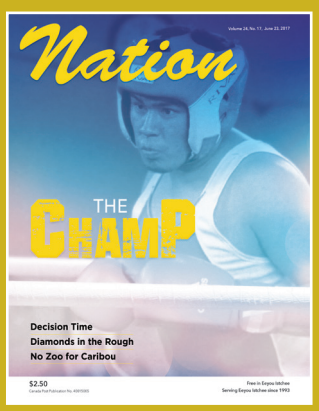
Award-winning journalism 39

REZ NOTES

My throne speech 41

UTNS

Talking to geese 42



Michael "Champ" Petawabamo
Photo by
Fabien Laprise

Editorial

Change and **continuity**

by Will Nicholls

Every year *the Nation* enters stories we have published over the previous year in the Quebec Community Newspapers Association awards competition. Usually, it is the individual writers, photographers and designers who are honoured, but the awards we receive are all the result of a team effort.

Without the support of copy editors, accountants, administrative staff, salespeople and many others, *the Nation* would falter. This teamwork has helped us survive since we published our first issue back in 1993.

It is an honour to provide the only independent print news publication for the Cree of James Bay. At times it may be difficult but it's never boring. Throughout the years we have made many changes, evolving from what some would call an old-school design. The older printers loved it, because black and white makes their lives a lot easier. I remember one telling us it was great to pull out the old equipment and tell the newbies at the print shop that's how they did it in the olden days.

Over the past year I am sure many readers have noticed the visual changes we have been making to your newsmagazine. These were carefully planned and implemented to reflect a more vibrant and colourful vision of the Cree Nation. After all, our people have changed to embrace the world around us, and it follows that we should as well.

We are proud that a young photographer, Trish Chiasson, took home first place in the Feature Photo category at the QCNA awards. But it wouldn't have happened without the design prowess of our new graphic designer, Matthew Dessner, who is responsible for much of the new, vibrant look in *the Nation*'s pages in recent months. She made his job easier, but he made her work look dynamic – all to the benefit of our readers.

One thing that hasn't changed is the commitment to provide our readers with the best possible product we can. The proof of that is how our peers in the newspaper industry honour our efforts every year. This year was no different.

> I congratulate not only this year's award winners, but all the staff here at *the Nation* for their dedication to **serving the Cree of James Bay**.

Check out page 39 for details on our awards haul this year. We are mighty proud. As editor-in-chief I am pleased with the recognition of *the Nation*'s role as a community newspaper for so many communities. No other community paper in Quebec has such a large coverage and distribution area.

I congratulate not only this year's award winners, but all the staff here at *the Nation* for their dedication to serving the Cree of James Bay.

PETRONOR
www.petronor.ca

Distributor of petroleum products and lubricants in the James Bay Territory, and Abitibi-Temiscamingue

Services:
- Delivery of petroleum products in bulk
- Aviation fuel
- Rental of movable tanks

Products:
- Unleaded gas, stove oil, clear and coloured diesel, Jet-A, 100LL and lubricants.

Addresses:

Radisson Depot: T: (819) 638-8222 F: (819) 638-7107
Chisasibi Gas Station: T: (819) 855-2427 F: (819) 855-3462
La Grande Rivière Airport: T: (819) 638-9104
EM-1 Construction Site: T: (819) 865-2045 F: (819) 865-2039
Ville Marie: T: (819) 629-2266 F: (819) 629-2204
Amos Depot: T: (819) 732-5334 F: (819) 732-5705

Administration office: 1401, Chemin Sullivan, Val-d'Or
T: (819) 824-5505 F: (819) 824-5420

the Nation is published every two weeks by Beesum Communications **EDITORIAL BOARD** L. Stewart, W. Nicholls, M. Siberok, Mr. N. Diamond, E. Webb **EDITOR IN CHIEF** Will Nicholls **DIRECTOR OF FINANCES** Linda Ludwick **EDITORS** Lyle Stewart, Martin Siberok **PRODUCTION AND SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR** Joshua Grant **CONTRIBUTING WRITERS** S. Orr, X. Kataquapit, D. Isaac, J. Grant, D. Coyle **DESIGN** Matthew Dessner **SALES AND ADVERTISING** Danielle Valade, Wendall Gull **THANKS TO: Air Creebec**

CONTACT US: The Nation, 4529 CLARK, #403, Montreal, QC., H2T 2T3 **EDITORIAL & ADS:** Tel.: 514-272-3077, Fax: 514-278-9914 **HEAD OFFICE:** P.O. Box 151, Chisasibi, QC. J0M 1E0 www.nationnews.ca **EDITORIAL:** nation@nationnews.ca news@nationnews.ca **ADS:** Danielle Valade: ads@nationnews.ca Wendall Gull: wendall@nationnews.ca Mike Ryan: sales@nationnews.ca **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** $60 plus taxes, US: $90, Abroad: $110, Payable to beesum communications, all rights reserved, publication mail #40015005, issn #1206-2642 **The Nation is a member of:** The James Bay Cree Communications Society, Circle Of Aboriginal Controlled Publishers, Magazines Canada Quebec Community Newspaper Assn. Canadian Newspapers Assn. Les Hebdos Sélect Du Québec.

News

Roaming free

Caribou herd avoids zoo, Cree focus now on own dwindling numbers

by Dan Isaac | Photo by Sylvain Paquin

Quebec's unilateral decision to relocate a caribou herd from the Val-d'Or region to the Zoo sauvage de St-Félicien has been reversed. Faced with a public outcry, the zoo decided to drop its request to the provincial government to move the entire herd into captivity.

Following the original April 20 decision by Quebec's Forests, Wildlife and Parks Ministry, an online petition condemning the relocation was launched by Abitibi-Témiscamingue Boreal Action (ABAT), Nature Québec, and the Society for Nature and Parks (SNAP Québec), gaining 15,394 signatures in under a month.

The petition, along with the collective response of First Nations leadership in the region, was enough to overturn the decision. In a statement released June 6, the zoo's board of directors named "social acceptability" as the main reason behind the reversal.

In a precursor to the zoo's refusal, Quebec's environmental review agency BAPE said in a public report that it would not give its approval to the proposed Val-d'Or region Akasaba Ouest mining project. The BAPE report cites the threat to the woodland caribou habitat as too great a risk and goes on to say that it would be "premature to conclude that it would be impossible to restore the [woodland caribou] population."

While Quebec could have chosen to ignore BAPE's recommendation, with the zoo's refusal of the herd, it now has no choice but to shift its efforts to habitat remediation and preservation methods in the Val-d'Or region – a move that could signal the end of the proposed Akasaba Ouest mining project.

"We're in support of the Val-d'Or herd staying in the wild. We voiced our opinions regarding that," said Isaac Voyageur, CNG Director of Environment and Remedial Works and Regional Environment Administrator. "If an animal is born in the wild, it should perish there."

Some say it's now time for the Cree to focus on their own dwindling herd of migratory caribou. The Leaf River herd of migratory caribou's population has been in free fall for years.

According to Alan Penn, the CNG's Lands and Environment Science Advisor, it was estimated that the Leaf River herd's population stood at "several hundred thousand – perhaps as many as a million" in the 1980s and 1990s. As recently as five years ago the population was thought to be stable at 430,000, but in the summer of 2016 the herd was estimated at just 181,000.

The CNG has long been working with Quebec to mitigate the population loss. Only recently, however, has progress been made. "It's likely that sport hunting will be closed on the Leaf River herd in 2018-19," Voyageur told *the Nation*. "These negotiations have been going on for several years, and now with the recent numbers, Quebec will finally be closing the sport hunt."

Penn said this development has important management and conservation implications both for the Cree and Inuit.

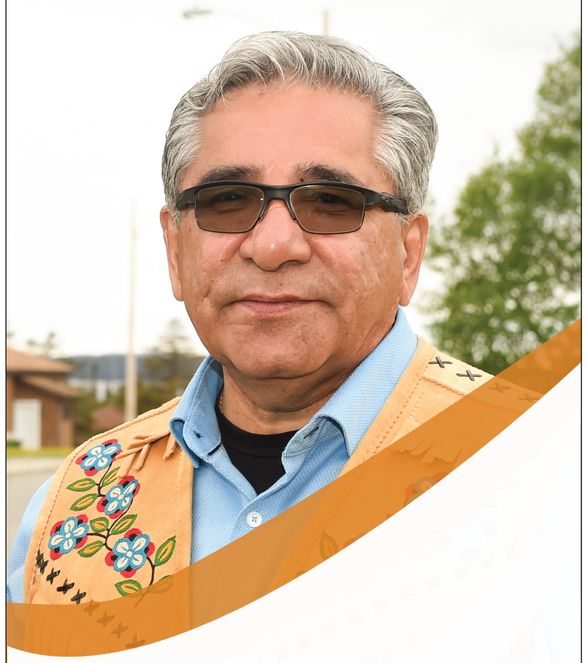
"However, the situation of the Inuit is likely to become particularly worrying," said Penn. "They face problems of food security and do not have access to the road networks that have become so important in the Cree hunting economy."

In total, 10 Inuit and four Cree communities' food security rely on the seasonal migrations of the Leaf River herd. The coming years will require collaboration, and in some cases, difficult choices to be made by both the Cree and Inuit people.

"The Cree have fought long and hard to try and preserve our herds, but as a nation we have to start making some hard decisions," said Voyageur. "We need to record our harvest as well as be mindful that regardless of how little we harvest, it will still have an impact on the overall herd."

Penn sees the future conservation of the Leaf River herd as a challenge, but in every challenge there is an opportunity. "The Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee and the Nunavik Inuit will have to collaborate their conservation efforts – and in doing so maintain the cultural role of caribou in the regional Indigenous hunting economies."

ABEL **BOSUM**



CHIIYAANUU

CHIIYAANUU, we will work in UNITY to bring out the best in us, the best from our communities, the best from our Nation, and from everyone who aspires and dreams to be part of a dynamic and prosperous Eeyou Nation!

CHIIYAANUU, we will address our family issues, we will address our community issues and we will address our Eeyou Nation issues, with transparency and courage!

CHIIYAANUU, we will revisit what has worked in the last 40 years and we will strengthen it. We will look at the issues that have divided us and we will address them with one objective, "TO BE UNITED"!

CHIIYAANUU, we will make concrete efforts to build our human capacity. Our Capacity Building Strategy will bring together all the Eeyou resources to ensure everyone who wishes to obtain a career or a job skill will have the support and means to attain it!

Alternative Suspension

Taapwaauchaayimiisu
Believe In Yourself

OUR PROGRAM

Taapwaauyimiisu (Believe in youself) program is a resource available for the schools in the three Cree communities, where the pilot project is currently being launched . We offer support to the students' ages 12 to 17 years old who, for various reasons, are temporarily suspended from 3 to 5 days from school.

The expression ***"Believe in yourself"*** is dear to our program as we want to send a strong message of empowerment and self-worth to our youth.

OUR SERVICE SITES

Taapwaauchaayimiisu program in Mistissini has officially moved in their new service site at the Family Resource Centre (Old Youth Centre). Thank you, Cree Nation of Mistissini, for your collaboration in providing space for our youth.

We would also like to thank everyone that attended our open houses in Waskaganish and Chisasibi.

Should you require more information, please contact the coordinator.

Tel: ***(819) 527-0407***

E-mail: ***Byourself@cngov.ca***

Alternative Suspension

Department of Justice and Correctional Services, CNG

Cree School Board

AFN signs MOU with the Trudeau government, public response mixed

A memorandum of **opportunity?**

by Dan Isaac
Photo provided by AFN

Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde and Prime Minister Trudeau signed a memorandum of understanding that sets out an ongoing engagement to ensure progress on issues facing the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

More specifically, it calls for three annual meetings to be held between Canada and the AFN Executive Committee, one of which will be chaired by Trudeau himself. Topics covered in the first meeting of this AFN-Canada working group range from "policing and community safety" to the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"This commitment to meet will help ensure that the government's priorities are consistent with First Nations priorities," Bellegarde said in a statement. "First Nations will set direction for these meetings and the AFN will ensure we are making progress on an agenda as determined by First Nations. This is about action and results for First Nations, which will benefit all Canadians."

Other topics in the MOU include: implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action; development of an Indigenous Language Act to support the revitalization and strengthening of languages; supporting the nation-to-nation relationship; and creating dialogue around closing the socio-economic gap.

But for lawyer and Indigenous rights activist Pam Palmater, what's not on the agenda is cause for concern. "It's really stunning in that it's not addressing things like missing and murdered Indigenous women, First Nations kids in care, or the exclusion of Indigenous women from the Indian Act," said Palmater in an interview with APTN. "To me it's just the old boys' club at it again."

And Palmater wasn't alone. Following the announcement on June 12, critics took to Twitter and other social media platforms to voice their concerns, among them that the AFN is a policy and lobbying organization and not a First Nations signatory, and the possibility of backroom deals. However, one pro-MOU anonymous source told *the Nation* that, "Some would find a way to snatch defeat from the jaws of progress."

"There's a very large diversity of Indigenous peoples, and a very large diversity of opinions as well," AFN Regional Chief for Quebec and Labrador Ghislain Picard told *the Nation*. "I certainly respect the opinion of others but, for me, I rely on the wisdom of my chiefs."

For Picard, the MOU represents an important opportunity, but nothing is written in stone. "If we find the process doesn't provide for what we're hoping to achieve, we will get out of it," he said.

If nothing else, it's a symbolic commitment. The last time a sitting prime minister agreed to meet with a delegation of First Nations chiefs was in 2013 during the Idle No More movement. The last time First Nations leadership had an official, ongoing structural link to a prime minister was back in the 1970s when the National Indian Brotherhood established a joint NIB-Canada Cabinet Committee with the Pierre Trudeau government.

"We have to look at things in the context of the day and understand that we have a federal government that has demonstrated it wants to engage with First Nations leadership," said Picard. "The MOU provides resources that the AFN was denied during the Harper years."

As always, the onus will be on First Nations leadership to push for real structural change and ensure this isn't just keeping up appearances for the Trudeau Liberals. With just two years left in Trudeau's mandate, questions over whether these meetings will lead to concrete results are legitimate.

"One thing we don't have control over is the political climate at large. This government has less than two years before it starts campaigning," said Picard. "But it gives our region a purpose to mobilize and invest time and energy into the process in the hopes that it will trigger some desperately needed changes in our communities.

"Ultimately, with three meetings a year, I don't need to be at every one. I can offer my seat to any chief in the region who needs to have their say with the prime minister," said Picard. "It gives all the regions the opportunity to have their voice heard on issues relevant to their particular situation."

THE MARKETPLACE

Contact Danielle Valade at 514-272-3077 or ads@nationnews.ca to advertise

Are you an Aboriginal victim of police abuse?
We can help!

Services Parajudiciaires Autochtones du Québec
Native Para-judicial Services of Quebec

1-888-844-2094
pav@spaq.qc.ca
www.spaq.qc.ca

UNIGLOBE One Travel

CREE NATION Holyland Pilgrimage
Escorted by Lance Cooper

November 20-30th 2017

$3795.00 CDN includes
Round trip air/hotel accommodation/touring/two meals daily
insurance and tax

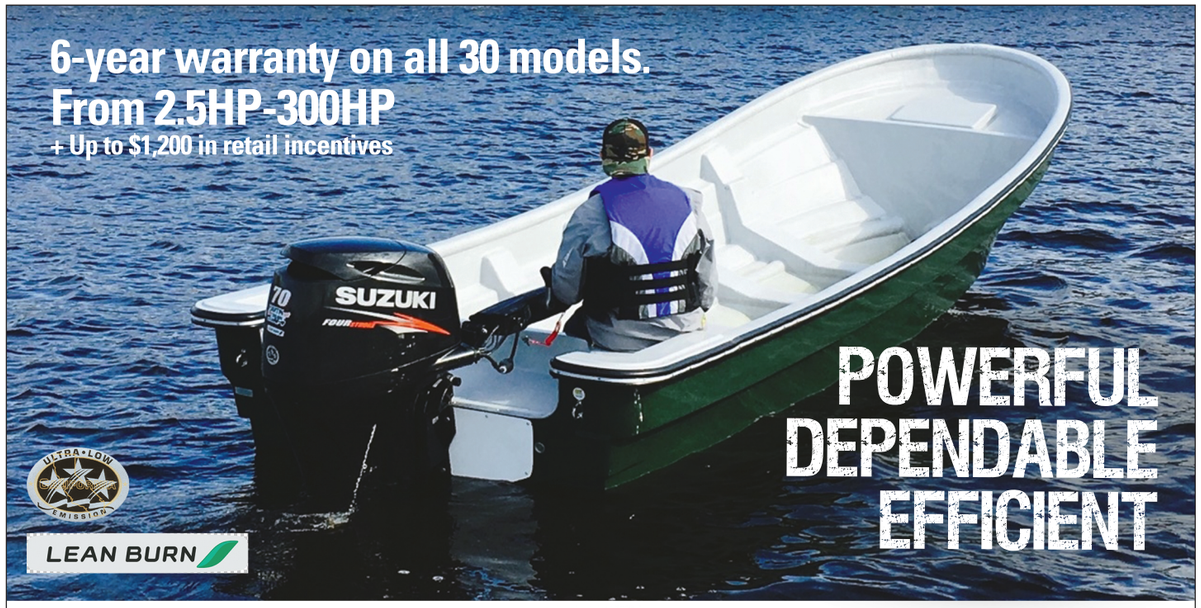
Contact:
nealc@uniglobeone.com
lancepcooper@hotmail.com

NEW

10 ads
5 months of visibility

A page filled with little ad spaces, enough to be seen by our readers without breaking the bank!

- **Ad sizes:** 1.75 x 1.75 inches; you can combine up to two spaces horizontally or vertically
- **Price:** $396 for a single space package, or only $39.60 per ad
  $792 for a double space package or only $79.20 per ad



MARTIN TOUT TERRAIN
Val-d'Or, QC 819-824-4575
martintoutterrain.com

L'EXPERT MARINE
Alma, QC 418-769-3433
lexpertmarine.com

SUZUKI

Way of Life!

Retail Incentives & Additional SPP coverage available on select new and unregistered Suzuki Marine Outboard Motors purchased at a participating Canadian Dealer between April 1st, 2017 to June 30th, 2017. Suzuki Retail incentives are direct-to-dealer incentives deducted from the MSRP. Retail incentives from $50 (DF2.5SJ) up to $1,500 (DF300XSS) on select models. SPP warranty listed includes 36 month factory limited warranty plus an additional warranty, coverage to total listed SPP coverage on select models. Warranty and SPP warranty offered has no dollar value and cannot be exchanged or resold for any monetary value. Model may not be exactly as shown. MSRP and promotion may change without notice. This promotion is time limited and certain conditions may apply; please see your participating Canadian dealer for complete details. Offer cannot be combined with any other special offers, promotions or financing incentives unless specified. PDI charges from $110 to $528, freight charges of $40 up to $115, taxes, license, insurance, applicable fees and registration are extra dependent on model. Specifications, product features and colours are subject to change without notice. Read your owner's manual carefully and remember to observe all safety regulations. See your participating Authorized Suzuki dealer for availability and complete details. Suzuki. Way of Life!

In Brief

Final TEHQ program class graduates

Photo provided by Niskamoon

The final graduating class of Cree students in the Technical Employment with Hydro-Québec (TEHQ) program received their diplomas June 7 at the Théâtre du Cuivre in Rouyn-Noranda. Representatives from Niskamoon, Hydro-Québec, the Cree School Board, the Centre de formation Harricana and the Rouyn-Noranda school board were on hand to celebrate their achievement.

Founded after the signing of the 2002 Apatisiiwin Agreement, the program has trained over 120 qualified and gainfully employed Cree workers.

This year's cohort included 15 Cree graduates of the Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics program at the Centre Polymétier in Rouyn-Noranda and eight Cree graduates of the Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics program at the Centre de formation Harricana in Amos. A gala was held at Hôtel Gouverneur le Noranda following the graduation ceremony for partnering organizations, family and friends to honour the end of the employment agreement and celebrate its achievements.

Graduates in Automated Systems Electro-Mechanics included Nicholas Bordeleau-Genest, Audrey Boutin, Jennifer Boutin and Norma Wabanik (Waswanipi); Rebecca Diamond, Naythan Kistabish and Patrick Mowat (Waskaganish); Glorianna Kitty, Skylar Kitty-Polson, Tommy Quachegan and Ronnie Sam (Chisasibi); Tyson Mark-Stewart (Eastmain); Dally Ruperthouse and Menish Ruperthouse-Mapachee (Nemaska); and Samy Mark-Thameri (Mistissini).

The graduates from Industrial Construction and Maintenance Mechanics were Craig Georgekish (Wemindji); David House (Chisasibi); and Kathleen Kistabish, Lisa Kistabish, Romy Kistabish-Rankin, Sharlene Polson, Stanley Kistabish and Tina Houle (Waskaganish).

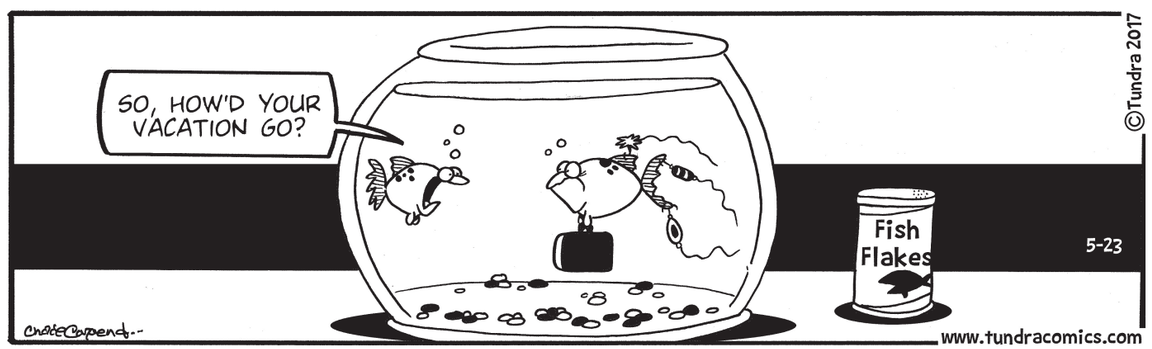
Indigenous Screen Office founded

The founding of an Indigenous Screen Office was announced June 12 at the Banff Media Festival by APTN in collaboration with the CBC, the Canada Media Fund, Telefilm Canada, the Canadian Media Producers Association, and the National Film Board of Canada. Associated partners include Bell Media, the Harold Greenberg Fund and VICE Studio Canada.

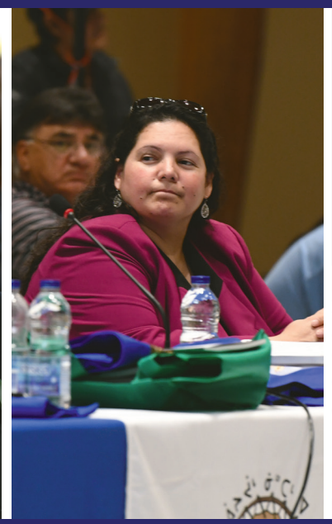
Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly explained that Indigenous creators often face systematic barriers in the industry that have made it difficult to share their stories. "The creation of the Indigenous Screen Office will help address these barriers, provide direct support to creators, and showcase Indigenous content in Canada and on the world stage," said Joly.

Mandated with the development, support and promotion of Indigenous screen-based media, the office is the result of a multi-stakeholder process launched in January. Its first priority is to hire qualified staff and then move on to the real work of supporting talent development (including script writing); film and digital media training; and facilitating relationships between Indigenous professionals and broadcasters, distributors and federal funders.

Joly's comments were echoed by industry stakeholders who addressed the plethora of systemic barriers Indigenous artists face in breaking into the film industry. "In developing the long-term strategy for the Indigenous Screen Office, it will be key to ensure that Indigenous Canadians, as custodians of Indigenous narratives, are in charge of telling stories about Indigenous Peoples," said Jean La Rose, APTN's Chief Executive Officer.



THE PEOPLES' CHOICE



Candidates for Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief answer our questions about their plans for the Cree Nation

It's election time again for the Cree Nation Government's top positions. This year will see a new Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief elected. Advance polls are on July 5 and election day is July 12 to decide which one of the hopeful candidates will lead the CNG. Grand Chief candidates include Abel Bosum, Darlene Cheechoo, Ashley Iserhoff, Rodney Mark and Richard Shecapio. Candidates running to be our next Deputy Grand Chief are Mandy Gull, John Matoush and Reggie D. Neeposh.

For this election *the Nation* sent the same six questions to every candidate to answer as they wished. We felt this would be fair to everyone running. There is more than likely a lot more that the candidates would like to express than only their answers to our six questions. They will have time to do so before the election is over.

Four of the five candidates for Grand Chief sent their responses in time for this issue, as did all three candidates for Deputy Chief.

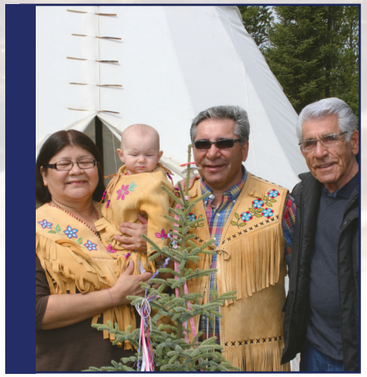
The Cree Radio Network, along with Cree CBC North, will host a Grand Chief's debate July 4 from 7-9 pm. The debate will also be live-streamed. Details will be available on the Cree Radio Network website and Facebook page.

Good luck to all candidates.

Abel Bosum

1) What makes you the best candidate for Grand Chief?

Whether I am the best candidate for Grand Chief or not is not for me to say. I can only tell people what I believe in, and what I would do if I were given the privilege of serving the Cree people as Grand Chief. My life's work has centred on developing respectful relationships yet fighting against the injustices our people have experienced. That is in the fabric of who I am. It is who I will always be. It will be up to the people to decide if I am the candidate they envision as the next Grand Chief.



2) What is your position on the Cree Constitution and Governance?

When I look back at the last 40 years of Cree struggles and the agreements that have come out of that long struggle, what is remarkable to see is how the Cree Nation has reshaped our story from one of oppression to one of sovereignty.

We are taking back control, writing our own future and blazing a trail for Indigenous Peoples around the world. We are recapturing what was lost during several hundred years of colonization and exploitation by European powers. We are recapturing our status as a Nation with our own laws. The Governance Agreement gives power back to our people and gives us control over how we want our communities to be governed.

It is time for our people, and our leaders at the local level, to come together to continue to move us forward. It is now time for us to seize yet another historic opportunity for the Cree Nation of Eeyou Istchee to advance the cause of Indigenous rights and the cause of Indigenous nation-building. For me, this Governance Agreement is a further step in the very special history of the Cree Nation.

We have built upon the strength of our treaty – the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. The New Relationship Agreement with Quebec (the "Paix des Braves") was built upon our treaty. The New Relationship Agreement with Canada built upon that agreement. Then, further building on these, we signed the Governance Agreement with Quebec, followed by the Governance Agreement with Canada. We have gradually put into place all the building blocks of a strong Cree Nation.

The Cree Nation continues to move forward and all of our major agreements have brought us greater autonomy. A key issue which we must all look at is how we will reshape our constitution once we have brought it home. It is our local people who will decide the next steps in the continued development of our constitution and how we may wish to change the way we govern ourselves. This will be a key to our future development as a Nation.

3) What do you think is lacking most in the Cree communities and how would you address it?

One of the major initiatives for our communities must be to address our housing shortage. Our communities are in a state of crisis with respect to the adequate numbers of affordable and suitable housing units. I am convinced that the absence of sufficient housing units is directly related to many health-related issues as well as social issues that our people face. Ensuring suitable housing for our people is the key to laying the groundwork for success in all areas of community life. This must become a priority for the Cree Nation.

The fortunate thing is that we are not starting at the very beginning. The Cree Nation Government has already begun carrying out work to develop a housing model adapted to the needs of our communities and for our people. We will build on the work done to date to develop a Cree-made approach to our housing shortfall and implement that approach immediately. It will be the key to successes in so many other areas.

The Cree Nation must make substantial investments in housing and I believe the best way to do this is to support individuals and ensure that sufficient grants are provided to make new housing affordable for all.

CANDIDATES FOR GRAND CHIEF

As Grand Chief, I will promote the establishment of a Special Housing Fund of $100 million to accelerate the development of a private housing market in our communities.

In addition, we will need to support our communities to improve the existing housing. A substantial investment is urgently required to renovate housing in the communities. I will propose a commitment of more than $10 million annually just for community housing renovations.

I am confident that by making housing a top priority that, together, working with all our communities, we can address the serious housing shortage.

4) What program(s) administered by the Cree Nation Government needs more funding? Are there any programs where the CNG could allocate less funding?

Over the last few years, one of the top priorities in my work for the Cree Nation has been on capacity building. We need to ensure our youth and future generations are prepared to enter into every employment sector and to do so will require obtaining professional, administrative, technical and skilled labour training.

To realize such a vision requires that we have the human resources to carry that vision forward for the benefit of our people, our communities, our Cree Nation, and in reality, for the future generations of Crees. We must do whatever is needed to make this happen. Building our Eeyou workforce must be made a priority.

We need to invest in a new Cree Jobs Initiative to support the engagement of our youth in internships, apprenticeships and new job placement opportunities, which is achievable by working with our local and regional entities as well as the private sector throughout the territory. This will require extending subsidies to employers and to provide increased training opportunities. The Cree Nation Government will need to increase funding for these purposes.

Supporting local Cree businesses must be the focus for the next several years as we know that the employment within our local governments and within our Cree entities will not continue to grow at the pace we have seen in the past.

We will expand the Cree Entrepreneurship Program to ensure that barriers to developing and expanding new business opportunities are eliminated.

All community members and local administrators have recognized the need to have a "Cree Nation Paving and Landscaping Program". As Grand Chief, I will promote the establishment of this new program, which will require a commitment in excess of $100 million over the next five years.

I know that many communities have also expressed the need for a "Community Parks and Playground Program", which I will support as an extension of the Community Centres Program currently in place.

I am sure people will ask where the funds will come from to do these things.

Funding from the new Governance Agreement will be available for some of these costs and can be prioritized for these purposes. In addition, the Cree Nation Trust will be requested to set aside special funds to accelerate housing and paving initiatives. A number of the JBNQA obligations have been fulfilled over the first 10 years, as required by our New Relationship Agreement with Canada, and we now have the capacity to retarget funding to new initiatives.

Finally, we project continued funding escalation from the Paix des Braves which for 2017-18 reached a record high of $96,711,237 as new mining projects are brought into commercial production.

"We must make sure that our Cree unity is strengthened and nurtured so that as we enter the next chapter of our history we will do so with confidence and optimism knowing that, as a united people, ***there is nothing we cannot accomplish****."*

These additional funds can also be earmarked for these new initiatives.

The point I wish to stress is that we have the ability to creatively take on new and important initiatives for the Cree Nation with the financial resources we have available to us and we can, together, address the most urgent needs of our communities and our people.

5) Name an accomplishment that you were part of in a Cree community, Cree organization or in the Cree Nation as a whole in the past four years that made you proud.

The proudest moment of my entire career was when the families of Ouje-Bougoumou opened the doors for the first time to their new homes.

The people of Ouje-Bougoumou had been forcibly relocated from seven different villages to make room for mining development. My people were reduced to living in shacks on the side of the highways around Chibougamau. We were viewed as being in the way of development. From 1984 to 1998, while I was Chief of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, our people waged a long struggle to have our right to a permanent village recognized. Although many people thought that what we were trying to do was impossible, we fought on. After we secured agreements with both Quebec and Canada, we built our new village. That village went on to win many awards for its creativity and innovation, including an award from the United Nations.

But it was the impact on the people that touched me the most. And that has been what has motivated me and guided me in my work ever since.

6) Name three things you hope to accomplish during your term and why they are important.

Over the years, I believe that one of the strengths of the Cree Nation, and what has contributed to such remarkable success in our struggles to achieve recognition of our rights, has been our unity. We must make sure that our Cree unity is strengthened and nurtured so that as we enter the next chapter of our history we will do so with confidence and optimism knowing that, as a united people, there is nothing we cannot accomplish.

It is for this reason, that my campaign theme is Chiiyaanuu. Going forward, whatever we do, Chiiyaanuu, we must do together.

The struggles, the challenges and the hard work of the last 40 years has been about improving the lives of our communities and building the capacity of our people. It is time now to bring the benefits home so that our people at the community level see what this has all meant for their prosperity, their health and their security.

Based on these guiding principles and themes I hope to:

- Implement a Cree Nation housing program to address the housing shortage in the communities.
- Increase our efforts in implementing an effective approach to capacity building, with a particular focus on our youth.
- Develop and implement a Cree Jobs Strategy to ensure the financial stability of our people, families and communities.

I hope to accomplish these and many other issues if my candidacy results in the Cree people asking me to serve them as their Grand Chief. I would invite everyone to see my full platform on my website at abelbosum.com.

Ashley Iserhoff

1) What makes you the best candidate for Grand Chief?

I was raised in a home where we were nurtured and cared for. Our parents showed us what leaders do, to take time to listen, to understand, and be there to show support. Many know we faced a challenge in 1987, I remember our parents showing us no matter how hard it was – we do not give up. This teaching is still in me, it will never disappear.

Since I was 13, I worked with many leaders, both young and old, in youth leadership, then went on to local Council and Deputy Chief. In 2005 and 2009, I was elected as Deputy Grand Chief. Today, I am well aware of where we stand as a Nation, but I am also mindful of the issues that are affecting our people.

I've always been a believer, a people builder, an encourager, a person who leads life by example and most importantly a leader who is transparent with no hidden agenda.

2) What is your position on the Cree Constitution and Governance?

When I was Deputy Grand Chief, we reviewed the proposed New Relationship Agreement. The Cree People were aware of negotiations and discussions that we had with Canada. We travelled throughout Eeyou Istchee with the proposed agreement for consultation, to review and it was subsequently approved by the Cree Nation.

Being a signatory to that agreement in 2008, I saw the potential of the Cree Nation taking the important role of governing Eeyou Istchee and implementing the JBNQA.

The Cree Constitution and Governance is an important milestone and opportunity for the Cree Nation.

Between 2009 to 2012, there were a series of consultations to draft a Cree Constitution. We visited the young peo-

"It might be ambitious, but every morning when I wake up, I think of my young nephew William and my niece Legend, that they will be able to attend school free from the challenges of today, they will plan out their future and not lose sight of it, because ***we will all be there to cheer our children on."***

ple in schools, met with Elders, the women and men in various sessions and a lot of ideas were given. Sadly, I didn't see it reflected in the proposed Constitution. However, in order for things to move we can proceed in signing the agreement, there will always be opportunities where things can be improved.

3) What do you think is lacking most in the Cree communities and how would you address it?

I think trust is lacking in many different forms. I've always believed elected officials are servants of the people, and I know many look to leaders for direction. Thus, a leader must be open to listen, to understand and address the peoples concerns, rather than it being the other way round. When a policy is developed, there are impacts in our communities and institutions/organizations, I seem to see CNG almost becoming too bureaucratic when it comes to program dollars for various initiatives for our communities. In 2008, this was a concern I heard repeatedly in the consultations: don't make the CNG like "Indian Affairs". I think listening to suggestions of the people and coming up with the Peoples Agenda would be important for me.

Working with local Chiefs and Councils, improve and increase the services of our Police and Justice, work with various stakeholders, such as the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and the Cree School Board, would be inevitable.

4) What program(s) administered by the Cree Nation Government needs more funding? Are there any programs where the CNG could allocate less funding?

Hydro development was announced in the early 1970s, and the ones who spoke of our livelihood, our hunters entered the courtrooms to speak for us and future generations were our Elders and our hunters. Today, I keep hearing how they're still finding it hard to access or receive support.

I always believe that there are many who want to continue traditional pursuits and we must find innovative ways to help our hunters, so they can pass on the knowledge to our younger generations. Knowing who you are as a Cree, speaking your language, practicing the way of life makes you who you are. We must find better ways to support the Cree way of life; lives can be restored out on the land.

When it comes to allocating less funding, it would definitely be in the way we use consultants. It seems we listen to them more than we do to our own people. I still find this unacceptable. We have a lot of educated Cree who can assume the many roles that consultants have today. Why not give our people that opportunity?

5) Name an accomplishment that you were part of in a Cree community, Cree organization or in the Cree Nation as a whole in the past four years that made you proud.

I've always believed accomplishments are always of the Cree Nation, not individually, however it's a collective effort. I was raised to encourage others to contribute to improve the many challenges we face. Currently, I'm in public administration as a director with a team of stakeholders, we are addressing the mental care for young people to receive help within 72 hours to see a professional or a community life coach. It's to help the system that's in place today.

6) Name three things you hope to accomplish during your term and why they are important.

It might be ambitious, but every morning when I wake up, I think of my young nephew William and my niece Legend, that they will be able to attend school free from the challenges of today, they will plan out their future and not lose sight of it, because we will all be there to cheer our children on, where there will be no housing backlogs, better health, having sustainable and long term employment. Where Eeyou Istchee continues to give us great strength and we find a balance in ensuring future generations have access to the land and water like we do today. Development must be done at a pace where damage cannot compromise our way of life. It has sustained us for thousands of years.

Rodney Mark

1) What makes you the best candidate for Grand Chief?

Leadership is about bringing people together to develop a common vision, to facilitate the best thinking in order to make the best decisions for the best outcome. A team approach to leadership has always been my preference, and I intend to continue this approach if elected as Grand Chief.

2) What is your position on the Cree Constitution and Governance?

I am 100% behind this great opportunity for the Cree Nation. It is especially important at the community level. Stable and consistent funding enables each Chief and Council to engage all their citizens in the process of developing a long-term community plan. This is the best time to be Chief and sit on the Council or to be in senior management, as this will empower the administration to plan and most importantly to implement their plans

3) What do you think is lacking most in the Cree communities and how would you address it?

Currently what is lacking is cooperation and collaboration with different entities at the local and regional level. We need to develop partnership agreements on specific issues, such as diabetes and chronic disease, with the Cree Health Board, the low graduation rate with Cree School Board and prevention programs with Cree Nation Government.

4) What program(s) administered by the Cree Nation Government needs more funding? Are there any programs where the CNG could allocate less funding?

We need to put more funding in youth and recreation programs. However, I would like to see these programs use a more integrated approach by collaborating with community-wide initiatives to promote healthy eating and physical activities, the importance of traditional practices and prevention programs.

5) Name an accomplishment that you were part of in a Cree community, Cree organization or in the Cree Nation as a whole in the past four years that made you proud.

I am very happy you asked this question, as this gives me an opportunity to thank the Grand Chief Mathew Coon Come for giving me the opportunity to chair the Special Assembly, which took place in Chisasibi on Wildlife Habitats and Natural Resources. As a result of this Special Assembly, a comprehensive research project is taking place in the coastal communities on eelgrass.

6) Name three things you hope to accomplish during your term and why they are important.

As the Deputy Chief and Chief of the Cree Nation of Wemindji, I was part of developing and implementing both three-year and five-year community action plans. This was achieved using a team approach. Therefore, it would only be natural for me, as Grand Chief, to develop and implement a 10-year Cree Nation Action Plan. Why? Why? Why?

- Health: 25% of our adult population has diabetes, and, if nothing is done in 15 years, it is predicted to reach 40%;
- Education: 9.9 % graduation rate, 64.6% retention rate, 27.65% secondary absenteeism rate, 18.7% elementary absenteeism rate, and only 42% of students who make it to Secondary V are likely to graduate;
- Recreation: healthy development of our children and our people.

Richard Shecapio

1) What makes you the best candidate for Grand Chief?

Whether There is a wind of change in Eeyou Istchee, I have felt that wind and I am listening to the voices it carries. We need leadership that takes its direction from the people – that engages with our population, understands their interests and their worries and integrates these voices into the decision-making, planning and carrying out of our mandates as leaders. This is the approach to leadership I have always taken, and this is the way I intend to lead the Cree Nation Government, if I am elected.

I know we work best when we work together with a collective approach. This has always been my approach and an approach that I believe in. I see a Grand Chief's role as harnessing the experience, talent and strengths of an entire team and an entire Nation towards the same goal of self-determination, unity and health. This collaborative approach to leadership requires experience, confidence, courage and humility. As Winston Churchill wisely said, "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

To be elected Grand Chief is a tremendous responsibility. It requires a willingness to work extremely hard day after day. It also requires skills in negotiating, management and finance and the ability to operate and work in three different languages. I am fluent in Cree, English and French, and have spent most of my adult life learning and gaining experience in negotiating and managing teams. And thanks to the strong examples of many people I worked with in the past and present, I have learned to work hard and not to shy away from a difficult goal or project. Most importantly, I learned the virtue of living a life firmly grounded in family and dedicated to our loved ones.

I honour the great work of our prior Grand Chiefs and their dedication to advancing the self-governance and well-being of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee. Because of their work, we have become leaders and trailblazers for Indigenous rights across Canada and the world. Now the time has come for a new generation of leaders to take over the reigns, and to harness this history, with the wisdom of our Elders and the confidence and energy of our youth. We need to keep moving forward in a way that is inclusive and doesn't lose sight of our biggest asset – our strength as a Nation united.

2) What is your position on the Cree Constitution and Governance?

When the draft Cree Constitution and the Cree-Canada Governance Agreement were first presented to the Cree Chiefs, I initially shared many of the same concerns of other Crees, particularly around issues of taxation and Own-Source-Revenue. To ensure the Cree Nation of Mistissini understood the full implications of these documents and agreed with the approach, our Council embarked on an intense review of every chapter and provision, and we explained the documents using various approaches to our membership, listened to their concerns and brought these concerns back to the Cree Nation Government.

I now support both the Cree Constitution and the Cree-Canada Governance Agreement. They move the Cree Nation towards greater self-governance, and recognize Cree authority over matters such as culture, language, taxation and matrimonial property. Through the Cree Constitution, we will govern ourselves and make decisions internally about how we operate as a Nation, without the intervention and control of the federal government.

However, I never agreed with the process for how these documents were negotiated and how our communities would be consulted. Unfortunately, there was too little consultation too late. In the early stages of negotiations, there was lack of opportunity for the Chiefs and Councils or the membership to voice concerns that could be brought back to the negotiating table. The texts of the documents were presented without any openness to change. This is the opposite of a team-approach and the opposite of Cree values. If elected, I commit to always ensuring the Chiefs and Councils are included and consulted when important agreements and documents are being discussed, especially if they involve issues of jurisdiction and the distribution of powers between the Cree Nation Government and the Cree communities.

Moving forward, the Cree Constitution will be in Cree hands, and I see this as an opportunity for the Chiefs and Councils work with the Cree Nation Government to strengthen our Cree Constitution to ensure it takes into consideration important Cree values.

3) What do you think is lacking most in the Cree communities and how would you address it?

Every Cree community is in dire need for more and better housing in Eeyou Istchee. I would work hard to attract entities such as the Board of Compensation and the James Bay Eeyou Corporation to invest Cree funds towards housing. I would explore the creation of a Rent-to-Own Revolving Fund to promote and facilitate home ownership for our people. I would also work hard to find ways to introduce and support real estate opportunities for developers who are willing and ready to build and sell homes that are affordable for our people. Some Cree communities have been very successful in managing their Private Home Ownership programs and we must recognize their accomplishments and use their success to assist other Cree communities on the implementation of their programs.

4) What program(s) administered by the Cree Nation Government needs more funding? Are there any programs where the CNG could allocate less funding?

Over the last few years, one of the top priorities in my work for the Cree Nation has been on capacity building. We need to ensure our youth and future generations are prepared to enter into every employment sector and to do so will require obtaining professional, administrative, technical and skilled labour training.

As the Cree Nation continues to grow, it is essential we place sufficient emphasis on having the infrastructure and the housing in place to support this growth. Only with proper support, services and infrastructure can our growth be properly sustained and successful. Therefore, I believe the challenge for the Cree Nation Government is to find ways to increase its funding in areas such as housing and infrastructure projects, including community paving. These types of projects require significant investments, and it is imperative to direct these opportunities towards Cree owned companies so they too can continue to build their workforce and grow their respective companies.

We need to evaluate the levels of funding the Cree Nation Government provides to groups – such as Cree Nation Youth Council, Cree Women's Association, and Regional Elders Council – to ensure these groups have adequate funding to carry out their mandates and contribute to have a collective voice. My plan is to make sure that all parts of our population are involved in building our Nation together.

Of course, when you increase funding in certain areas, you must find that money from somewhere. It would be interesting to see how much money could be saved on the use of external consultants. Much of the amounts involved could be made up from creating greater efficiencies in the present structure and functioning of the Cree Nation Government.

"My priority would be developing a strategic plan together with the involvement of all Cree Chiefs to set ***the direction for the CNG for the next four years."***

5) Name an accomplishment that you were part of in a Cree community, Cree organization or in the Cree Nation as a whole in the past four years that made you proud.

As Chief of the Cree Nation of Mistissini for the last seven years, I have been honoured to be involved in many important accomplishments and projects realized in Mistissini. Some of the accomplishments I am proud of are:

- Mistissini's opposition to uranium mining in Eeyou Istchee, which led to a halt of Strateco's proposed advanced exploration project, a moratorium on uranium mining in Quebec, followed by the refusal by Quebec to grant the authorization to proceed. Mistissini continues to be involved as interveners

on the legal proceedings instituted by Strateco against Quebec.

- Mistissini's participation on the development and construction of Stornoway's Renard Diamond Mine, which is the first diamond in Quebec and situated in Eeyou Istchee.

- Finalizing the settlement agreement between the Cree Nation of Mistissini and Quebec Government on the Mistissini/Ouje-Bougoumou land transfer. The collaboration and support from our people allowed another Cree community to have the same recognition as the other Cree communities.

- Mistissini's recent takeover of the operations and management of the AMW Wildlife Reserve, which was operated by Sépaq for many years.

- Realization of numerous infrastructure and alternative housing projects in Mistissini, such as:
  - Construction of the New Youth Centre
  - Construction of the Mistissini Bridge
  - Construction of the Commercial / Office Complex
  - Investment into a Pre-fab Housing Plant
  - Introduction to Real Estate approach as alternative solutions to increase housing in Mistissini

- Numerous investments and projects to support Cree employment and entrepreneurship:
  - Creation of the Mistissini Opportunity Fund (fund that supports business start-ups or expansions), and the creation of Home Improvement Program for private homeowners.
  - Mistissini's participation in the extension of Highway 167 North project, which provided opportunities for Cree companies to participate using a collective approach.

6) Name three things you hope to accomplish during your term and why they are important.

My priority would be developing a strategic plan together with the involvement of all Cree Chiefs to set the direction for the CNG for the next four years. It is imperative to embark on this journey together as they know first hand the issues that require immediate attention from their respective communities. This process would include reviewing AGA resolutions to ensure there is movement and action on matters raised by our people.

Another priority that was always important for me is to ensure Cree priority on opportunities related to contracts and employment. We need to work together with other Cree entities in finding solutions to make sure these opportunities are geared towards our people. This same approach is required also in the service delivery we provide for our people in sectors such as education and health.

As mentioned earlier, another important priority is housing. I would work hard to put in place the possible housing solutions I previously talked about in question three. Some communities have worked hard on developing project plans geared towards housing, and I would encourage and support their initiatives. Their business ideas would certainly be part in addressing our housing situation in the Cree Nation.

CANDIDATES FOR DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF

Mandy Gull

1) What makes you the best candidate for Deputy Grand Chief?

First of all, I have to thank the nominators for their trust in me as a candidate. It is a pleasure to receive support from every community. I think there a few things that set me apart from the other candidates but I will touch on the three main points.

The first being my background in politics. I am the only candidate to have the unique experience of working alongside our former Chief Paul Gull when he was Chief and Deputy Grand Chief as his administrative arm. As the Deputy Chief and the CNG representative for Waswanipi, I am aware of the present, up-to-date issues that are going on at the Cree political table. That is my advantage – I understand the internal mechanisms on the administrative and discussion on the political side.

With so much of my early work experience being in the domain of Cree politics I guess it inspired me to study it. So the second point would be my education. I studied at Concordia University where I graduated with two bachelor's degrees: one in Political Science and a second one in Public Affairs and Policy Studies. I think my experience and my education have created a strong foundation for me to take on this role.

The third advantage is that I am a newer candidate, which is a strength because I bring the perspective of change to this process. Knowing how to create collaboration and discussion when bringing in new ideas something that is needed when managing change. As a candidate I am promoting the idea of new vision for the Cree Nation so this is something that I think will be my strength.

2) What is your position on the Cree Constitution and Governance?

Our leadership has worked diligently to advance the Cree position and I respect their work. It's tough being a politician as your position should be that of those you represent. My community had many questions and in the end chose to move forward so I had to carry out their wishes. I hope that whoever takes over the lead on this file really takes the time to build up and develop the document further with input from the community level.

3) What do you think is lacking most in the Cree communities and how would you address it?

Each community has their own specific needs, some I know of, but I am interested in learning more from them. Right now what I see affecting us as a Nation is that we need to take advantage of is our post-secondary graduates. We spend Cree money investing into these students and I see many of them struggling to find employment after completing their programs. Cree entities should be fighting over them! Getting our people to bring back their new skills and knowledge is a must. I hope to really encourage and open dialogue with our entities for a regional HR plan to know where employment opportunities will be and getting students to come for internships and summer employment. We need to attract students and make sure they come home. I don't want to see them go elsewhere. They are the true builders of our Cree Nation. We need to provide the local level and entities with funding to attract and retain them to work for the Cree Nation.

4) What program(s) administered by the Cree Nation Government needs more funding? Are there any programs where the CNG could allocate less funding?

The CNG budget process is an interesting one every year. Our communities do a great job with the local director general and treasurers planning for spending. In terms of our regional projects and entities that we contribute to, my ques-

tion is on transparency and accountability. We need to review reporting on spending and their projects to really evaluate how we spend our Cree money. Some organizations receive the same funding year after year, but are we holding them accountable for the spending? As a government we are responsible to our members to keep them informed of the way we spend and invest – a big part of that is through reporting and providing access to the financial information.

5) Name an accomplishment that you were part of in a Cree community, Cree organization or in the Cree Nation as a whole in the past four years that made you proud.

My passion was really working on environmental protection. Our fight to protect the Broadback and getting our members, other communities and Quebecers to understand the importance of this file is really something great to be part of. I am so proud to be Cree. We have direct access to governments, a great deal of savings and investments, access to a beautiful land base, we use our Cree language and practice Cree culture. These factors are all reasons why we should protect our traditional territories – the land is the reason why we are who we are. There are many other First Nations that do not have the same advantage so protecting the land is protecting the Cree way of life. The Broadback file has taken me across Canada, to the US and recently to England. Speaking on behalf of this forest has truly been an honour and privilege for me. I take the trust of our tallyman and Elders to heart so I will always cherish that.

I also had the opportunity to work on a mining file with duties that ranged from negotiation for the community, consultation with the tallyman, creation of companies to access contracts and the creation of over 30 new employment positions. It was a pleasure to work with my council in helping our members with employment. It was also challenging because mining is the only domain in which the Cree are not protected by legislation by the provincial government. We deal with each project in our territory on a case-by-case basis. This is where dialogue is needed to really work with the Quebec government to establish a protocol and process that is more inclusive to Cree communities and protection when projects pop up. This is probably where the CNG can invest more funding – to really provide support and information to communities. They are the key to providing regional information on training to really understand mining and their impacts.

6) Name three things you hope to accomplish during your term and why they are important.

The role of a good Deputy is to sit with the leadership and clearly understand where they want to go with their term, hold them to it, and support them to achieve it. Their role is to keep everyone on the path they set out but also be flexible enough to know how to support them when things change but always keeping the same end goal in mind. Both the Grand Chief and Deputy Grand Chief need to make sure we understand the mandate assigned to us by the members and get the team to implement that direction through the council board members and the CNG administration. I see myself as a member of the team that works to open communication and dialogue between the regional government and the communities themselves. I think it's one of my strengths.

Of course, I have a few ideas that I would like to see be carried out, and if the council board members supported them then I would gladly push the file. I see the need for a Cree Nation strategic plan developed by the communities. Can we really say where we want to be at in 20 years as a Nation? Does every community know it? We are trying to build a rapidly growing Nation that is heading towards self-government and what we need is a clear plan that is created with the input of the people. This is important to measure our successes and contribute to the regional and local levels working together.

Of course, when you have the opportunity to have influence to a cause I would have to say personal commitment would be supporting patients in their battles against cancer. We need to really examine the increase of cancer rates throughout Eeyou Istchee. I am often touched by how families support each other. I met a lady from Eastmain who had so much positive support that I believe it helped her with her recovery. Also the amount of support for a young boy from Waswanipi and Mistissini who battled cancer moved me. I saw their health journey and I think that really contributes to overcoming this disease. We as a Nation need to stand with those who have won their battles and celebrate and remember those that have gone on. We need information and support for them and their families.

I follow the John C. Maxwell philosophy of "Great leadership is not about advancing yourself but about advancing your team." So long as I am there to serve and support then the duty is accomplished if our Nation elects me to the position. I have to say I'm touched by the support and positive comments from across Eeyou Istchee. I'll be using my Facebook account to announce my campaign platform and the dates for visits the communities. I will be hosting "Coffee With The Candidate" nights. Please come by and have a coffee and muffin with me and say hello.

Lastly, I have to extend my best wishes the other candidates. Thank you to *the Nation* for providing this space to all the candidates to connect to the members in this extremely short and challenging campaign period. It is such a pleasure to share a few of my platform points and please visit my Facebook page for more details or meet me in person to ask questions.

John Matoush

1) What makes you the best candidate for Deputy Grand Chief?

First, I acknowledge our Creator for his continued presence and guidance in my life and family.

As one of the candidates for Deputy Grand Chief, I am a person who welcomes new challenges, is eager to learn new things and take responsibility.

Being a husband to my wife Anita-Rose Sealhunter with six children is truly a blessing! This family life teaches us to have strong family values and respect for others, this life makes me the person I am today. I am a leader who is very open-minded, very respectful to others, humble and courageous when needed. I do not accept that it cannot be done as I have shown in the past with some of the challenges I overcame as an individual working with and for our members.

I bring a strong sense of direction and commitment to succeed in what challenges we continue to face; I enjoy working with other people, other organizations and believe in having strong network and partnerships.

I have gained over the years serving in the capacities as Youth Grand Chief/Chairperson of Cree Nation Youth Council, Council/Board Member for the Grand Council of the Crees of Eeyou Istchee, Band Councillor for my Community of Mistissini and finally Deputy Chief of Mistissini. These 10-plus years in politics have allowed me to learn and confidently prepare me for this aspiration I have, to be your Deputy Grand Chief.

2) What is your position on the Cree Constitution and Governance?

As part of a growing Nation and self-government, it is important to have our own Cree Constitution that is inclusive in all sectors of our Cree Nation and Governance. Our constitution, which is a living document that provides guidance in our governance as a Nation, is vital in our progress.

The Cree Constitution identifies the various jurisdictional powers and authority the Cree First Nations and Cree Nation Government can make laws over Category 1A lands. With the Cree assuming control and enforcement of the laws, it is a positive step towards the self-governance. In any governance responsibility, it is crucial to ensure the land and people are at the forefront as we move forward with our growth and development.

The Cree Constitution, approved by all Cree communities, is a strong statement that we are more than capable of managing our own affairs and relations as a growing Nation. I fully support the Cree Constitution and am ready to continue to build on the mechanisms of how the Cree Constitution and Cree Governance will work. As we move with our constitution, our governance agreement will learn as we go, we will have to make amendments that will strengthen as we evolve as a Nation. I believe, in having an inclusive constitution will continue to assert our Cree way of life, our Cree Nation's growth and aspiration for today and for future generations.

3) What do you think is lacking most in the Cree communities and how would you address it?

There are several things that come to mind and one of the main areas we lack is communication between our members and the leadership. As a leader with a major responsibility and undertaking of the many on-going files and issues we tackle, it is important to ensure that our communication with our people remain open and find ways to continue providing up-to-date information and understanding on one another. This includes ensuring consultation and information sessions are provided as an opportunity for our people to share their input and contribute as we continue working for a vibrant Cree Nation.

4) What program(s) administered by the Cree Nation Government needs more funding? Are there any programs where the CNG could allocate less funding?

I realize many of the programs will continue to be implemented and developed as needed based on the interests of the communities. The responsibility and financial funding envelopment is an exercise that needs to happen to look at funding opportunities and changes to be made, this approach will allow for long-term planning in the various sectors.

I have always been keen on addressing our housing backlog, with the Cree Governance Agreement and Constitution. The Cree Governance

Agreement, in the process of cabinet approval, will allow us to look at more long-term plans and help address our housing needs.

I will also work closely with the communities, through their administrations as we have our directors' and treasurers' meetings that look closely at what situations and needs each community faces.

It is also important and I will work with our Cree organizations – like the Cree Regional Trappers' Association, Cree Outfitting Tourism Association, Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association, Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association, Cree Nation Youth Council, James Bay Cree Communications Society, Eeyou Communication Network, Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation to name a few. All of these are important organizations making up our Nation and its support service delivery they provide.

So really at this point, it is difficult to say which program would receive less funding without carrying out an extensive planning exercise. This is one of the areas if elected I would ensure to be carried out, my vision and goals as a leader will also work in line with our next Grand Chief's vision and goals along with members of the Cree Nation Government and our Communities, as well as Chiefs and elected officials (including Chairs of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, Cree School Board and other organizations).

5) Name an accomplishment that you were part of in a Cree community, Cree organization or in the Cree Nation as a whole in the past four years that made you proud.

As an individual pursuing to lead people, seeking the challenge for public office and successfully being entrusted the confidence and support to serve people is an honour and privilege. I am truly thankful and humbled. Having served as a Youth Chief, Youth Grand Chief, Band Councillor, Deputy Chief, Council/Board Member for the Grand Council of the Crees/Cree Regional Authority, much of this came from my aspiration and compassion to continue to make things happen by working together, I am eager to continue to learn and gain knowledge, wisdom and experience in my aspiration to serve you as your Deputy Grand Chief.

Having worked as a project leader and later leading the Cree Nation Youth Council as Youth Grand Chief, some achievements we have done for the youth and our people:

Planned and successfully implemented:

- The first Regional Youth Winter Journey "1999 Journey through the Heart of Eeyou/Eenou Istchee, Bring our People Home"
- Purpose: to raise funds for a hemo-dialysis for our people that needed the service; amount raised, over $500,000.
- Successfully negotiated and signed the first Cree Regional Youth Investment Funding Agreement between the Cree Nation Youth Council and the Quebec provincial government under Premier Jean Charest.

Cree Nation of Mistissini:

- Successfully negotiated and signed an Impact Benefit Agreement known as "Mecheshoo Agreement" with Grand Council of the Crees, Cree Nation of Mistissini and Stornoway Diamonds.
- Successfully completed the Mistissini Bridge Project.
- Successfully negotiated and reached the agreement on the Mistissini–Ouje-Bougoumou Land Transfer.
- Successfully won the fight against Uranium Development in the Otish Mountains with the support of the Grand Council of the Crees and many partners throughout the province and national level.

Many of these achievements stem from working together. I believe by working together for a common goal strengthens our network and communication.

6) Name three things you hope to accomplish during your term and why they are important.

Hmm, this is an interesting question, as a large population and the dynamics we have along with the any issues we continuously tackle, listing only three things is difficult as there are many other areas we can list.

Within a term in office, there is much work needed and am eager to work on some of the things are important to tackle, Housing is one the files we as a Cree Nation Government will have to address, having a comprehensive housing plan will help of key players and partners will work towards addressing the housing issues we currently face, if we can revisit the housing plans we have and work on longer term housing plans I believe this will help our communities to advance in addressing our housing situation and issue. This is one area I see the Cree Nation Government along with other partners needed to get involved sit down and work towards a much more long-term housing programming for our Nation.

Another area is to continue with Education and Training of our people to enter in the workforce in the opportunities we have, this will help address our high unemployment rate. It is important to work with Cree School Board, Cree Board of Health and Social Services and our business community to realize the potential we have.

As a thriving Cree Nation, it is also important to keep our Cree way of life strong, this part of our being is important, and I believe we should continue to ensure continued support is provided to our people that continue to practice our way of life. This will also help strengthen our families, healing, rejuvenation of the mind and soul and has always being one of the significant elements to our Cree way of life. It is important for our Nation's Social and Economic Growth.

Reggie Neeposh

1) What makes you the best candidate for Deputy Grand Chief?

I would prefer to talk about the qualities required to become an effective Deputy Grand Chief. Anyone seeking office as a leadership role within the Cree Nation should be a proven leader. This candidate should have a record of knowing how to get things done and not being afraid to take action on important issues. The candidate's background should demonstrate that his or her background provides the candidate with the experience to undertake a wide range of challenges and see them through to a successful conclusion.

On a personal level, a candidate for Deputy Grand Chief should set an example in his personal life and be a role model for what a leader of the Cree Nation should be. That personal background should include an understanding of what it means to a respectful parent, as in my case, a devoted husband and father. That candidate should also understand from administrators of our Cree entities. The people will decide on July 12, which candidate they think best demonstrates these qualities.

2) What is your position on the Cree Constitution and Governance?

I fully support the new Governance Agreement and a Cree Constitution as it adds additional powers and responsibilities to our local governments. We are truly becoming self-governing Indigenous people. In order for this noble achievement to be fully realized, we need to provide additional support to our leaders, community members and especially our youth. We will need to guide them to obtain the necessary training and skills so they can govern the Cree Nation effectively and wisely. This is a remarkable opportunity and we must take full advantage of it.

3) What do you think is lacking most in the Cree communities and how would you address it?

There is no question in my mind that the most serious problems in our communities are related to the lack of adequate housing. This must become among the very top priorities of the Cree Nation. So how do we remedy this problem? I know for a fact that banks are willing to lend the money to Cree people in order to construct housing units. The Cree Nation Government must be fully engaged and involved in developing appropriate solutions, which build on this availability of funds for housing construction and put forward a Cree Nation plan for fixing this very serious problem.

4) What program(s) administered by the Cree Nation Government needs more funding? Are there any programs where the CNG could allocate less funding?

I believe that we need to do more to ensure that those groups who feel their voices are not being sufficiently heard are given all opportunities for that to happen. We also need to identify more creative ways to engage these groups in the life of the Cree Nation. In particular, I would like our Cree women to feel that their engagement is welcome. Our Cree women must have a voice in the affairs of *the Nation*, as they are important contributors to the building of the Cree Nation. The same is true for our Cree Nation Youth Council and Elders.

5) Name an accomplishment that you were part of in a Cree community, Cree organization or in the Cree Nation as a whole in the past four years that made you proud.

While I was Chief of the Ouje-Bougoumou Cree Nation, I had the privilege of presiding over the signing of Complementary Agreement #22 to the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. This agreement formally brought Ouje-Bougoumou into the JBNQA having all the powers, duties and responsibilities of the other Cree communities. This event marked the culmination of decades of hard work and struggles on the part of the people of Ouje-Bougoumou to finally have a home of our own – a home that would not be subject to the whims of the mining companies that in the past had our previous villages forcibly relocated to make room for their activities. I was deeply touched by this historic ceremony and I was very

Réseau de communications EEYOU Communications Network

EXCHANGE

3X+ TRIPLE-PLAY PLUS

ECN will offer Triple Play Plus by spring. What is it?

Every home and business in Eeyou Istchee (south of the La Grande River) will soon be connected to world-class ECN Fiber to the Home 3X+ -- Internet, video and voice at the highest speed and highest quality at the lowest rates possible.

Why is it called 3X+?

3X+ is ECN digital triple-play plus service – Internet, telephone, TV as well as over-the-top video and private line services.

What does 3X+ offer?

Triple-Play Plus is 3X+, a full-feature bundled service from a single supplier, ECN:

Telephone with features such as call waiting, call forwarding, caller ID (identification), call screening, call blocking and conference calling and keep your number;

TV includes over 150 channels with all major networks, specialty cable and Internet channels; and music channels. Interactive TV and emergency news and information will also be available.

Internet, our strongest component, provides high-quality service that does not fail. Starting at 50 Megs up to 1 Gig. You set your speed.

Over-the top streaming video - Netflix, Apple TV, Amazon and more. That's the +.

All you need is a TV, a phone, a computer and an ECN set-top box.

Is it better than what I have? Is it more costly?

Telephone company Internet and cellular use outdated technologies and provide only voice and expensive data.

With ECN, you can forget monthly network telephone costs and fees for long-distance to other Cree communities -- or to most of Canada. And you get to decide what services you want.

ECN technology uses fiber, allowing for all the speed you need. Fibre networks are expandable and are often described as "future proof."

This summer ECN begins construction of its home-use phase – reaching all residents and local businesses. You will get the same quality of services that the major institutions have at less than you now pay. No more expensive satellite-TV; no more off-and-on slowpoke DSL; no more costly cell data charges.

Before next year's winter snows melt and the geese will once again be back, 3X+ will be in full operation. Look for more news on how to sign up this fall

ECN EXCHANGE will be back in the Nation next month. Email questions to: exchange@eeyou.ca

Your goals and accomplishments are impressive.

Your Annual Report

should be the same

BEESUM communications

514-272-3077
info@beesum.com
www.beesum.com

Department of Justice and Correctional Services

ᐊᔨᔦᓂᒃᑲᐧᐃᐣ ᑭᒃ
ᓂᔦᔦᓂᒃᑲᐧᐃᐣ ᐋᒪᑎᓯᐧᐃᐣ ᐋ ᐅᐢᑭ ᐃᓇᑭᒋᐢᑲᐧᐃᐣ

Record Suspension Program

You can apply for a record suspension (pardon) to have your criminal record sealed, which can help you to get a job

You may be eligible if you:

- Were convicted of a criminal offence
- Have completed all the requirements of your sentence and probation
- You have completed the 5 or 10 year waiting period, depending on the nature of the offence

If you are a Cree beneficiary, the Cree Nation Government (CNG) can help you to fill out the record suspension application and if you qualify for financial assistance, the CNG may pay the costs associated with the application.

Need Help on How to Apply?

Contact your Local Community Reintegration Officer:

Chisasibi:	819-855-2120
Eastmain:	819-977-2400
Mistissini:	418-923-2661
Nemaska:	819-673-2400
Ouje-bougoumou:	418-745-2260
Waskaganish:	819-895-2126
Waswanipi:	819-753-2770
Wemindji:	819-978-3300
Whapmagoostui:	819-929-3796

If you have any additional questions or need more information, please contact the Correctional Services Regional Office in Val-d'Or at 819-874-2600 or by email at justice.valdor@cngov.ca

www.creejustice.ca

happy to see that our people finally realized a very long held dream of coming home.

6) Name three things you hope to accomplish during your term and why they are important.

If I am selected by the people of the Cree Nation to serve them as Deputy Chief, I believe it is important to focus on those issues, those concerns and those initiatives, which are the most critical for the long-term health of the Cree Nation. Therefore, I would devote my energy to, first, tackle the housing crisis in our communities. Even though this is a very complex issue, the absence of enough housing units for our communities is directly related to many other problems and issues faced by our people. I believe we can take major steps to deal with our housing shortage, and I believe we can do so very quickly.

Secondly, I would focus on initiatives that would support our hunters and trappers. Our hunters and trappers are the true keepers of our Cree culture and language and I believe we, as a Cree Nation, should show our appreciation for their commitment to the Cree way of life by enhancing the programs and services that support them. Such initiatives would include measures to increase hunter and trapper revenues, and identifying economic development projects which are compatible with their continuing to practice the Cree way of life.

And thirdly, I would focus on our youth. It is absolutely essential that we involve our youth in the affairs of the Cree Nation that they will inherit. As our Cree leaders have stated for several years, if we are to realize the enormous opportunities, which are before us as a young Nation, we must ensure that our youth are prepared to carry on and take our Cree Nation to the next level. The future leaders of the Cree Nation are with us now, and they must be armed with all the knowledge and training that is required to truly manage and control the future of our communities, our Cree Nation and our region. To tackle this, we must do whatever it takes. It is really that important.

Diamonds in the rough

Crees taking advantage of opportunities at Stornoway's Renard mine

by Joshua Grant | Photos provided by Stornoway

Growing up with the Troilus gold and copper mine on his family trapline, it's only natural that Solomon Awashish of Mistissini gravitated towards a career in the mining industry.

"All my uncles and aunts worked at the mine site," Awashish said. "When I was 16 I dropped out of high school and worked in house cleaning until I was of age to work in the mine."

Awashish worked the Troilus site near Chibougamau for seven years, first as a lab sample technician, mill operator and crusher operator and then as an environment technician after the mine closed. Despite all his experience in the industry, in August 2015 he made the difficult decision to return to the classroom.

Completing a 900-hour mineral and metal processing program set up by Cree Human Resources Development (CHRD) and Stornoway Diamond Corporation, where he finished top of his class, brought Awashish to where he is today. He now works full-time in the Renard mine north of Mistissini and is Quebec's first ever certified diamond recovery operator.

Awashish completed the CHRD class in May 2016 and it wasn't long before Stornoway brought him on board as an apprentice. After he finished the practical training element of the program and passed his practical exam with flying colours, Ian Holl, Stornoway's Vice President of Processing, rewarded his hard work.

"I told them there would be a reward for the top student," Holl said, speaking of his regular visits to the CHRD class. "I didn't tell them what it was, but my reward at that time was a recovery plant operator position. It's the highest you can go before getting to the control room."

Holl said that during nine months of apprenticeship, Awashish worked extremely hard to familiarize himself with the Renard processing plant, meet the requirements of the position and fit in with the other workers on the site.

"Solomon put the effort in and developed quite well," said Holl. "He passed his panel interview and we said, 'Congratulations, you're a recovery operator now.'"

It didn't take long for another Cree to follow in Awashish's footsteps. When one of Holl's senior recovery operators resigned, Ryan Petawabano was given the opportunity to take over the position and also achieved the recovery certification. He joins Awashish as one of only two diamond mine recovery operators certified in Quebec.

Holl and Awashish both agreed that the path to a mining career and the work itself are not easy, but that the hard work pays off.

"I started out as a cleaner in a process plant and I worked my way up – that's why I share my experience with some of these youngsters," said Holl. "The training program is 900 hours – you're putting 900 hours away in your life for the future 40-50 years.

"I know some of those students suffered because I saw them every month," Holl added. "You have to get through it and know that you're building a better future for you and your family."

"My kids and my family were my main motivation," echoed Awashish. "I wanted to be a role model to my kids and to all the youth. I want people to know they can do anything they put their minds to."

Awashish thanked Stornoway for the opportunity, the CHRD for its help and his family for their support throughout the process, saying he couldn't have done it without them. He also offered some advice for Crees who are interested in pursuing a career in the mining industry.

"When you start out you have to get used to long hours, working 14 days on and 14 days off. You have to make a lot of sacrifices – I can't really go hunting now, I missed Goose Break this year and the most challenging thing for me is leaving my kids at home," he said. "The schedule is tough but you can still take your holidays and it goes by fast.

"I feel like I've accomplished a lot," he continued. "When I started the program I never thought I would be the first certified recovery operator in Quebec, I thought maybe I'd just be a press operator or something like that. I enjoy the challenges I have in the work place, it's all new to me. It's not the same as when I was a technician, it's a whole different ball game. You get to meet people from all over the world and it's a lot of fun."

In conclusion, Awashish urged Eeyou of all ages to seize opportunities when they see them.

"I'd like to encourage the youth and even older people to take the chance," he said. "If you see a program you're interested in, take it. It'll change your life."

Stornoway hosts open house in Mistissini, **recruitment sessions** in Waswanipi, Ouje-Bougoumou

Stornoway hosted its annual open house at the Mistissini Youth Centre May 30, inviting people from its host community to learn more about the process and progress of the Renard diamond mine. CHRD was also on hand to inform prospective students on the metal and mineral-processing program.

"We divided the gym into four stations," said Communications Manager Jodi Hackett. "We had an environmental section and a process station, where people could see the complete

"If you see a program you're interested in, take that chance. It'll change your life."

- Solomon Awashish

ᒋᐧᐦᐃᑲᓇᐦᑭᓂᐧ

Alternative Suspension

ᒋᐧᐦᐃᑲᓇᐦᑭᓂᐧ

ᓂᒋᐱᑎᓂᐧᐃᓂᓀᐣ

ᒋᐧᐦᐃᑲᓇᐦᑭᓂᐧ ᐊᐱᑎᓂᐧᐃᓀᐣ, ᐊᑲᓄᐣ ᐊ ᐅᐣᑭ ᐱᒋᐱᔨᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᑎᐧᐃᒋᑎᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᓂᓐᑐ ᑭᔭᔨᑎᒧᐃᑕᑭᓂᐣᐦᐁᐣ ᐃᑦᐦᐢᐁᓀᐣ ᐊᓂᒋᐦᐁᐣ, ᐊᑲᓄᐣ ᐊ ᐧᐦᑭᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᐊ ᐧᐃᐣ ᐧᐊᐱᐣᑎᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᒋᐧᐦᐃᑲᓇᐦᑭᓂᐧ, ᐊᑲᓄᐣ ᐊ ᐢᑐᓇᑎᐱᔨᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᑭᔭᔨᑎᒧᐃᑕᑭᓂᐣᐦᐁᐣ 12 ᐋᐣᐦᒪ 17 ᐊᐃᓐᐣᐧᐃᓂᐧᐊᓱᐣ, ᐅᐣᑭ ᐊᓂᑊ ᓂᐃᐣᐦᐁᐣ ᐊ ᑭ ᐃᔭᐱᔨᐣᐃᑯᑌ ᑎᑊᑖᐣ, ᐊ ᑭᑭᔭᑎᐣᐊᒪᐧᐃᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᑎ ᑭᔭᑎᒧᐃᒪᓱᐣ 3 ᐋᐣᐦᒪ 5 ᑭᓱᖾᐣᐧ

ᐊᓀ ᐊ ᐃᐃᓂᐃᑌ "ᒋᐧᐦᐃᑲᓇᐦᑭᓂᐧ" ᐊᑲᓄᐣ ᐊ ᑭᐣᖾᑊᔨᐣᑎᒪᐣᖾ ᐃᓂᑭᓱᐃᓂᐧᐊᓂᐣᑕᐣᖾ ᓂᒋᐱᑎᓂᐧᐃᓂᐧᐊᓀᐣ ᑭᔾᐣ ᐊᑯᓂᐣ ᑯᐃᔭᓀᐣ ᐊ ᐃᐃᐣ ᑭᔭᑎᒧᐃᒪᓱᐣ ᑭᔾᐣ ᑎ ᑭ ᓂᐧᐃᐣᐦᐁᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᑎ ᑭ ᓂᐧᐃᐣᐦᐁᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᑎ ᑭ ᐃᐣᐦᐁᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌᐣᐧ

ᐊᓂᒋᐣ ᐸᒥᐱᔨᐣᒋᖾᐣ ᓂᒋᐱᑎᓂᐧᐃᓂᐧᐊᓀᐣ

ᒋᐧᐦᐃᑲᓇᐦᑭᓂᐧ ᑲ ᐃᔑᓂᐣᑲᑌᑎ ᐊᐸᑎᓂᐧᐃᓀᐣ ᑭ ᐁᐣᒋᐣᒋᐅᑲᑌ ᐅᒪᓂᐧᐃᓀᐣᑲᐧᐃᑭᓂᐣᐦᐁᐣ ᑲᐧᐃᑭᓂᐣᐦᐁᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᐃᓂᐧᐃᑭᓂᐧᐊᓀᐣ (ᐁᐣᖾᑲᑌ ᐅᔨᑎᓂᐧᐃᐧᐊᓀᐣᖾ) ᓂᐧᐃᓀᐣ ᓂᐧᐃᓀᐧᐁᒪᐃᓂᐧᐊᓂᐧ ᒥᔨᑎᓂᐧᐃᓂᐣᐦᐁᐣ ᐃᐃᐧᐊᐣ ᐁ ᑭ ᓂᐣᐃᐸᒥᒋᐧᒋᐣᐦᐁᐣ ᐁ ᐃᐣᑎᓂᐧᐃᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᐊᑲᓄᐣ ᐁ ᐃᐣᒋᐧᒋᐣᐃᐧᐊᓀᐣ ᐅᔨᑎᓂᐧᐃᐧᐊᓂᐣᐦᐁᐣᐧ

ᓂᐧᐃᐣ ᓂᐃᐧᐁᒪᐃᓂᐧᐊᓂᐧ ᒥᐧᐁᐧᓂᑭ ᐊᐧᐁᓂᐣᑭ ᑲ ᐯᑭ ᑎᐁᐧᓂᐣᑭᒋᐧᒋᐣᐦᐁᐣ ᐁᐧᐁᐣᑭᒋᐧᒋᐣᐦᐁᐣᑕᑭᓂᑕᐃᑌ ᑲᐧᐃᑭᓂ

CHAMP

Cree fighter Michael Petawabano hopes to inspire youth with victories in the ring

By Dan Coyle | Photos by Fabien Laprise

Michael Petawabano took a major step toward achieving his boxing dream last May when he entered the ring for the first time at a gala event at the Chibougamau Boxing Club, where he was the lone Native on the fight card. The Mistissini 17-year-old went home with gold after defeating opponent Jefferson Briand, earning a judges' decision after three rounds of heavyweight boxing.

Petawabano's success in his first boxing match is a considerable achievement given that he only began training seriously in the sport eight months ago.

Acting on the advice of a friend who is active in combat sports, Petawabano decided to take his chances in the squared circle. Working with trainers Michel Jean and Tommy Bouchard at Chibougamau Boxing Club – and with Mistissini-based personal trainer Tommy Neeposh – Petawabano committed himself to a training regimen that often forced him to work out alone at home when he was unable to make the hour-long drive to Chibougamau.

"Michael's greatest strength is his passion for boxing," said Jean. He started boxing as a teenager before leaving Chibougamau to pursue academic interests, but Jean didn't face his first real test in the ring until returning to his hometown at age 40.

"The first challenge that Michael faced when he joined us last autumn was learning how to box," Jean added. "The moves aren't easy – it's like learning how to walk again. But Michael practiced a lot, even if he couldn't make it to the gym for all the training classes. He always showed confidence in his coaches, and people who helped him train. And always did it with a smile."

Petawabano readily acknowledges Michel Jean's contribution.

"He gave me a lot of pointers and made it easier for me to train at home," Petawabano said. "It was tough to get started. But I thought to myself, I have all this time to train. And my parents supported me without pushing me, and that was a big help."

Like most Cree kids, Petawabano grew up surrounded by hockey fans. But he was attracted to the cages of mixed martial arts, with former UFC welterweight champion and Montrealer Georges St-Pierre emerging as his childhood idol.

Now, with his first fight victory under his belt, Petawabano is more confident in his dream of becoming the first Cree professional MMA fighter. He plans on spending the summer training in preparation for his next fight.

means graduating this spring from Voyageur Memorial School. He will attend John Abbott College this fall in Montreal, where he plans to follow in the footsteps of his father Charles, a police officer in Mistissini, by studying Police Technology.

The social distractions and pressures that complicate the life of a typical teenager have had little impact on Petawabano.

"It wasn't much of a problem", said Petawabano, when asked how he was balancing his commitments to school and boxing with his social life. "I would usually be the one who would arrange to do something with my friends. But when there were times I needed to get things done, I just get it done."

That mature approach from such a young fighter makes Petawabano a future role model for Cree youth, which comes with a responsibility that he is quick to embrace.

"I want to become the first Cree to win an MMA championship," explained Petawabano, who plans to make the move to the cage upon his arrival in Montreal this winter.

"When I win a belt, I want to bring it north, and share it with the people who helped me, but also let young people know that they can do anything they want."

While the young fighter is outspoken about his athletic ambitions, he remains

Photos by Orenda Loon

humble and insists nothing he has accomplished would be possible without the love and support of family members, notably his parents and grandparents.

"I want to thank both my parents for all their support with school and boxing. They're the ones who made it possible. My grandmother, Christine Petawabano, she really helped me a lot. And my grandparents, who opened their home to me."

With a keen understanding of the importance that others continue to play in his life, Petawabano looks forward to paying it back, both as a role model to Cree youth, and by one day opening a training facility to teach young Cree athletes about the finer points of mixed martial arts.

"I want to remain an inspiration to youth up here," stated Petawabano, with a hint of emotion in his voice. "I know how things are not always on point in life for young people. I have been through tough things too, but I always want to do something with my life. Taking care of my siblings, going to school, always school first."

Petawabano finishes our conversation with a simple message for youngsters across Eeyou Istchee: "Keep your heads up, and keep going with your lives no matter how bad things go."

Wise words from a young man, for whom big things await, both in the cage and in his community.

Rodney Mark

A commitment to traditional values and the Cree way of life

A commitment to **traditional Cree values** means clean and safe communities that protect our way of life. It means promoting **healthy lifestyles**, a learning environment for our youth and an economy that helps develop and **support Cree business.**

Health: Address diabetes, mental health problems and other chronic diseases. We need to look at greenhouses and expanding the fishing program and to other tradition foods to all communities so everyone has healthy and tasty food.
Education: Improve our graduation rates. We are not alone among First Nations in having problems with educational success rates. Others, however, have had successes and we should learn from their examples.
Recreation: Promote healthy eating and traditional practices within sports programs at local and regional levels.
Justice: Expand accessibility to legal resources in every community. Develop partnerships with the Cree Health Board on legal matters to assist frontline workers. Research traditional Cree justice practices that served us well in the past and devise ways to apply them today.
Environment: Establish a comprehensive land-use plan that promotes and respects traditional knowledge and family traplines. At last year's AGA, it was suggested that tallymen could have similar powers as the game wardens. I support this initiative, as the Cree have protected the well-being of the environment for thousands of years.
Economic development: Implement the Cree Development Corporation. Ensure Cree-owned businesses can work anywhere in Eeyou Istchee to develop our own economies.

Vote Rodney Mark For Grand Chief

Who believes in a Common Vision and Common Approach to a 10-year Cree Nation Action Plan

Award-winning journalism

by *Nation* staff | Photos provided by QCNA

The Nation receives multiple honours at newspaper awards gala

The Nation took home a total of 10 awards – plus an honourable mention – at the Quebec Community Newspaper Association's awards gala in Sainte-Adele June 2.

The awards haul included three first-place finishes, three runners-up and four third-place prizes.

Among the winners was rookie photographer Trish Chiasson, who took home top honours in the feature photo category for a shot of a powwow dancer from her very first assignment for *the Nation*. According to category judge Eric Smith, Chiasson's winning photo had great impact.

"Live performances can be difficult to photograph for multiple reasons, such as lighting changes, movement and point of access," Smith wrote. "To get a successful image that can be incorporated into the design this nicely… very well done!"

It's not only on the editorial side that *the Nation* gained notice. Marketing Director Melissa Juliette topped the Best Advertising Creation (Large Format) category with a full-page ad designed by Jinheng Taing.

Finally, Nation writer and editor Lyle Stewart won the Best Education Story category for "Suspended Sentence," an article about how the Cree Justice Department is partnering with the YMCAs of Quebec to create an alternative suspension activity for students expelled from school. Category judge Tim Shoults commented that the story was "beautifully presented and a clear initiative in presenting a compelling subject."

Of note is that *the Nation* finished one-two in this category, as Nation production coordinator Joshua Grant took home second-place honours with a story about how the group Youth Fusion is helping Cree youth attain academic success. *The Nation* also won second place in the Best Special Section category for Joshua Grant's summer guide to traditional celebrations, "Travel the Powwow Trail." Another second-place finish was in the Best Editorial (Local Affairs) category, for Lyle Stewart's piece, "The great forest giveaway."

The Nation's third-place winners included:

- Will Nicholls in the Best Business Column or Feature category
- Sonny Orr for Best Column Writing
- Jesse Staniforth for Best Investigative Reporting
- Lyle Stewart for Best Feature Story

And finally, worthy of mention is that the honourable Will Nicholls received an Honourable Mention in the Best Editorial category.

ABEL BOSUM
BRINGING IT HOME

The Eeyou Nation has achieved many extraordinary milestones in asserting Eeyou rights, Indigenous rights and Human rights, which have translated into benefits for our Nation and our communities. The struggles, the challenges and the hard work of the last forty years have been about improving the lives of our communities. It has been a journey to social justice. We have blazed a trail for Indigenous rights internationally. It is now time to bring it home.

1. Youth Development Strategy

1. Encourage our Youth to complete their studies. Help develop their skills and training with the intent to have them enter and fill all sectors of employment from the professional, administrative, technical and skilled labour sectors so that we can become “masters of our own homes”.
2. Develop and implement an approach to ensure that jobs are readily available for Post-Secondar students while on summer break from their studies by establishing a liaison between students, Cree School Board and Cree entities.
3. Create and develop transition measures for Post-Secondary graduates so they can access employment in Cree organizations in their area of studies.
4. Develop internship/mentoring programs with Cree organizations to facilitate and secure employment for graduates upon completion of studies.

2. Community Development Strategy

1. Tackle our Housing Crisis by ensuring accessibility to housing which is affordable, while promoting home ownership.
2. Pave our communities to reduce health related issues, prevent housing decay, while adding value to our houses and beautification of our communities.

3. Economic Development Strategy

1. Negotiate the implementation of Sections 28.10.3 and 28.10.4 of the James Bay and Northern Quebec. Agreement dealing with preferential contracting and hiring.
2. Establish protocols to ensure that there will be preferential contracting to Cree entrepreneurs for all projects that take place within Eeyou Istchee.
3. Favour and Support small/medium local businesses to contribute to a strong and diversified Cree economy.
4. Promote new Cree economy.
5. Adapt the CCQ regime within Eeyou Istchee so that the approach to certification in the construction trades will be tailored to Cree realities.

4. Social Development Strategy

1. Establish a Cree Nation Social Development Plan by bringing together all Cree organizations and coordinating their resources and efforts.
2. Move towards creating a vision of a society where every member, every man, woman and child, has a place, a sense of value, a gift to bring.
3. Tackle systemic racism by implementing the recommendations coming out of the federal Inquiry i into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Quebec’s Judicial Inquiry on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public institutions.

5. Continuing the Cree Nation-Building Agenda

1. The last forty years of Cree history has been about putting into place all the building-blocks of a unique and strong Eeyou Nation. We must continue to work together to solidify our political gains and develop our Eeyou Constitution.
2. Establish a collective process of building upon the framework of the Governance Agreement.

6. Implementing Our Agreements

1. Bring home the benefits of the 80+ agreements signed by the Cree Nation.
2. Educate ourselves about the agreements and how to use them as tools to benefit our communities.

7. Cree Hunters & Trappers and our Environment

1. Put into place more initiatives to create wealth for the Trappers and bring their income levels up to a higher standard.
2. Promote the Cree Regional Conservation Strategy.

My throne speech

by Sonny Orr

Rez Notes

“The Warden of the North”

It’s that time of the decade again: the election for head honcho of the Crees of Northern Quebec. As I write this, there is little to speak of when it comes to unearthing scandals or uncovering dirt on the candidates. So, I will prepare a platform for their winning election tactics that will get everyone in a tizzy. In fact, whole networks will shut down because of the buzz and fury I intend to incite on paper, not by Facebook or any other instantaneous form of communication. I want to bring back the good old ways of winning elections on a budget.

First of all, there’s the door-to-door campaign, which, in my book, is a very effective way of putting a face to a vote. Some people are downright lonely and need company, even if it’s someone who just wants their X in a box on a ballot. I remember one lonely time during a campaign, a candidate actually asked for my help. Though I never got to go anywhere, it gave me a sense that, “Hey, this big shot needs my help in getting votes.”

Campaigning for me is not an act of compassion, but a way to cash in while the going is good, just in case the guy you help doesn’t make the cut in the first round. Recently, a new executive got in by acclamation, so there wasn’t much to be made from that.

Heck, if only there was a way to get to everyone at the same time without resorting to scandalizing (as Trump would call a deft move) just to get someone’s attention. One way to get everyone’s attention would be, that if I were running, to legalize alcohol and let the province worry about the problems using their fine system (pun intended) to handle the troubled and the drunk. I can hear the uproar now. I’m sure I could shut down a network with that platform. I’d probably be the most loved and hated candidate at the same time, with no real hairdo to make fun of too. Probably the number of voters for me would double for that one.

Another great platform I would promote is allowing hunting on Sundays and making Wednesdays the optional day off for hunting because it’s the middle of the week and Wednesdays are always boring. In fact, I would okay the hunting of everything just as long as it’s practiced using the age-old ways. This should attract the harvesters and hunters or anyone with a gun.

Another promise I would make but probably never be able to keep would be to have a house for everyone and be rid of the issues of homelessness or not being able to afford a home. Electricity would be free of course, made by our own power sources and bulletproof material would be custom-made for our cabins out on the land. Also, our homes would have a room just for learning, so we wouldn’t have to leave home just to get a credit for a course we couldn’t finish because we were so far away from home.

And on top of that, I’d make sure that no baby would go hungry or face the ravages of a broken home by offering shelters for children. This sounds drastic but there are shelters for women, men, the homeless, so why not one for the kids? I don’t think too many people would like that so my support would drop immediately. But you never know, this might appeal to the compassionate.

So there you have it, my platform in a nutshell. Of course, none of this will come true, simply because I’m not running for anything. But hey, if a guy could lie and win, well… naaww.

Under the Northern Sky

Talking to geese

by Xavier Kataquapit

In Kirkland Lake this past month, I had the opportunity to appreciate Niska (Canada goose) again. A couple of parent geese had decided to have their chicks on the edges of Kinross Pond, in the middle of town. I recently got back on my bicycle again and I have had the opportunity to watch this growing family almost on a daily basis. The geese had their chicks about a month ago and the four little ones are growing fast.

I am always amazed that I am able to watch them like this. As a boy with my father Marius and my brothers, we hunted these birds every spring and we never had the opportunity to be near them while they were alive. They were wild animals we could never approach closely. We rarely had the opportunity to sit nearby to watch their chicks or be near their nests.

I have some fun by calling the goose family at Kinross Pond with the classic "honk". There is actually a bit of skill in being able to make a goose "honk" sound. The sound comes from deep in the throat with plenty of forced breath to project a strong tone that can be heard from a distance. The sound you try to make is like "A-Wook". I am not the best at it. I make a good effort but I am not capable of projecting it loudly enough. My Mooshoom, grandfather James Kataquapit, was a great caller. He could open his mouth to call geese that were tiny specks on the horizon and they would turn to follow his voice. My dad and his brothers were also great callers and it came natural to them.

My family has a story that my older brothers Antoine, Mario and Philip actually recorded our elderly grandfather's voice on a tape recorder one year. They took the recording with them on a portable boom box and would play it to call geese. They said that even the recorded voice was enough to attract geese to their blind.

A great call is only the first step as geese are very intelligent in their ability to communicate. If a hunter calls too often, too repeatedly, too fast or erratically, then a goose will quickly understand that it is a not another goose that is calling and it will fly away from the danger. Many hunters had methods that taught us younger people to be patient, to call in sets of three honks, then to slow down the repetition as the birds approached. It takes practice because on the hunting grounds in the north, geese are very timid creatures.

One type of call that's rarely used is a loon-like cry. It sounds like a long-winded "aaaaaa hawwwwwww-ww". Geese use it sometimes mostly to attract distant birds they want to message.

A thid sound is one that some hunters like to use as the birds are landing nearby. You project a sort of panting sound from deep inside your throat. It is sort of a deep repressed "ha-ha-ha-ha" sound that is pronounced quickly. Geese use this as a sort of sound off to let everyone know they are landing.

People on the James Bay coast have been calling these birds for thousands of years. To my people, this majestic bird is a symbol of salvation from the long cold winter. We have relied on the return of Niska every year because they arrive at a time when food resources have run low. The new supply of food is also meant to give us a good stock of nourishment for the coming warm months of summer.

I don't hunt geese any more but I still feel a kinship to these birds when I see them. They have saved my people from starvation and famine for generations and I will always appreciate them for that.

I have grown familiar with the chicks at Kinross Pond. I call to them and they seem to take notice with the familiar sounds that I make. I noticed that three of them stay close to their parents while the fourth enjoys being away from the group. There is a rebel in the family and he (or she) is the one I appreciate the most. I like to imagine that the three closest to their parents will be the ones to follow the crowds and fly with the other geese to great nesting grounds with hundreds of others. The lone goose chick that likes to stay separate from the others will most likely be the one to return with a new family again next year to Kinross Pond. I look forward to seeing that goose and his family then too.

AEI

Anishinabek Educational Institute

www.aeipostsecondary.ca

- Accredited with Ontario Colleges
- Full time Certificate and Diploma programs with cultural components integrated into curriculum

2 locations North Bay 705-497-9127 and Muncey 519-289-0777 or toll free 1-800-334-3330

Everyone is welcome and there's no cost to apply!